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OUR SABBATHS IN DANGER.

BY

DANIEL MOORE, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF CAMDEN CHURCH, CAMBERWELL.

LONDON:

WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH,

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G. W. MEDES, CAMBERWELL.

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OUR SABBATHS IN DANGER:

A SERMON,

DEPRECATING THE CONTEMPLATED OPENING OF THE
CRYSTAL PALACE ON THE LORD'S-DAY,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1852, IN CAMDEN
CHURCH, CAMBERWELL.

BY DANIEL MOORE, M.A.,
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A SERMON.

MARK II. 27 :—“ And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

THE discriminating symptoms of hypocrisy or profaneness in a nation, it has been well said, are, that, by the one, outward ordinances are raised to an exaggerated importance; by the other, they are disparaged, depressed, and set at nought. In the words just quoted, the aim of our Lord appears to have been to put these institutions in their right place,—to enunciate a great principle, by which we could always distinguish between certain moral ends for which *man was made*, and certain outward appointments which were instituted and *made for man*. To obey God, to resist evil, to fulfil a providential designation, to strive after nearer conformity to the Divine image, to fit and capacitate the soul for a higher condition of being, these are ends,—man was *made for these*. But holy times, pious commemorations, solemn assemblies, the temples where we worship, and the sacraments whereof

we eat, these are only subsidiary and divinely appointed means ; they are not among the final objects of man's creation. They were ordinances *made for man*.

This argument, it will be perceived, would be addressed with much fitness to men, whose error, in relation to the Sabbath, leaned to the side of an over-strained and impracticable severity ; and who had just been urging it as a complaint against our Lord's disciples, that, in passing through a field on the Sabbath-day, they had relieved their hunger by plucking a few ears of corn. These cavillers are reminded, therefore, that, in the economy of salvation, all outward ordinances are to be viewed in the light of things secondary and subservient ; their mode of observance to be interpreted in harmony with the ends for which they were ordained ; and that, with regard to the Sabbath especially, care must be taken to avoid both the hypocrisy that would make the day to be honoured by a rigid ceremonial exactness, and the presumption that would overlook its eternal sanctity as standing in the will of God. It is in this last view that all the ordinances of religion, when clearly of Divine appointment, acquire a character of deep and momentous interest. Their foundation is in the will of God ; but that will, as we know, has, as its ever-guiding and controlling rule, a sacred regard to the highest interests of man. Nothing can be more dishonouring to God, or more untrue, than to

speak of outward ordinances as if they were mere arbitrary appointments, without significance and without benefit, as only so many meaningless enactments designed to test the willingness of human subjection; so far otherwise, they are means framed upon a wise and loving regard to all the aptitudes of our moral nature, and calculated, in their reverent use, to help man through all the difficulties of his course and to educate his immortal spirit for the employments of the world to come. *The Sabbath was MADE FOR MAN.*

Brethren, you are aware of the reasons which induce me, at the hazard of going over much of familiar argument, formally to review the grounds on which we hold that a PROPER MORAL SANCTITY does attach to the CHRISTIAN SABBATH:—that the institution itself has an origin, an object, a typical significance and value, which are independent of all economies, and will endure to all time; and, therefore, that any nation which shall presume to tamper with its unalterable sacredness, is drawing down upon itself those awful maledictions which, by an undesigned coincidence, have been so often recited in our ears this morning as the just retribution of POLLUTED SABBATHS.*

I. In trying to arrive at correct notions upon what may be due to the sacred day, and how far it may be lawful that churches and places of amuse-

* Lesson for the day, Ezek. xx., comp. verses 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, and 24.

ment should share its hours between them, our first thoughts are naturally directed to the Old Testament accounts of the Sabbath institution itself. Was its origin paradisaical, or patriarchal, or Levitical? And if it were either of these, were the reasons given for commencing it such as would pass away, when the dispensation under which it was given passed away? This question is important, because there is a current way of speaking of the Sabbath as if it were a mere festival of the Jewish Church, deriving its whole sanctity from the Levitical law, and only taken up by the Christian Church at second hand,—as among the *useful* things of the old economy which it would be as well to perpetuate, though not one of the *binding* things we were under any obligation to observe.

Now, to expose the absurdity of this notion, we have only to take the earliest Scripture notices of the institution which come to hand. In the second chapter of the book of Genesis, at the close of the account of the creation, we read,—*And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: BECAUSE that in it He had rested from all his work which God created and made.* If this passage stood alone, one conclusion only could be drawn from it; namely, that the institution of the Sabbath succeeded the creation immediately in order of time, and that it was

sanctified for reasons which must be binding on all mankind alike. But other notices in the writings of Moses follow, which might seem to militate against this view, and even to favour the erroneous notion I have adverted to, of the Sabbath having only a temporary or dispensational sanctity. Thus, in the thirty-first chapter of Exodus, we read,—

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant: it is a SIGN between me and the children of Israel for ever. Whilst, further, in the book of Deuteronomy, at the fifth chapter, we find Moses exhorting the people to the observance of the holy day, with this added reason: *Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.* Now, whether we are able to give any satisfactory account of these additional reasons for the institution or not, the revealed fact will remain the same,—namely, that the Sabbath was *not* Levitical in its origin, and was not even *first* made known to the Jews, at the giving of the law. Nothing can be plainer than that the Sabbath was both known and observed before the Jewish Church had any existence. For, besides the incidental notices both before and after the deluge,—such as Noah sending out the dove again “after other seven days,”—we find the Jews actually keeping a Sabbath

in the wilderness of Sin, before the covenant of Sinai had been entered into. Thus, at the giving of the manna, we have Moses saying unto the people, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: on that day ye shall not find it in the field: for the Lord hath given you the Sabbath: therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days:*—language plainly implying that, at that time, the Sabbath was an established observance of the religious life. What shall we say, then, of those *subsequent* reasons for the institution which connect it with a peculiar national covenant? or with the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage? Why, not that they are meant to be reasons for the institution *itself*, but reasons for a particular time and form of its *re-promulgation*. The children of Israel, it is to be remembered, had been for several hundred years under captivity in Egypt. Many of their ordinances, it is likely they would have forgotten; and their Sabbaths, it is all but certain, their task-masters would not permit them to observe. On their Exodus, therefore, it became necessary that there should be a formal *re-enactment* of the holy day; not only by a repetition of those moral considerations, on account of which the Almighty had originally set it apart, but also with a recital of such other arguments as should make the sanctity of the day especially binding upon *them* as a nation; namely, that in their revived and perpetuated Sabbath, they were to keep up a grateful com-
me-

moration of their deliverance from Egypt, as well as behold a standing pledge or seal of the covenant into which God was then entering with his people. To infer that mankind had never observed a day of sanctified rest until the Sabbath was made a sign of the covenant with Moses, would be as unreasonable as the inference that the sun's light had never been refracted in the rain-drops, until God set his "bow in the clouds," to be a sign of his covenant with Noah. It pleased God to take an existing moral fact in the one case, as He had taken an existing physical fact in the other, to be a perpetual and visible memorial of his own gracious purposes. And, surely, to the Israelites, in all ages, it must have been a great encouragement to see the promise made unto their fathers guaranteed by a seal, which was honoured as the first token ever made to human kind, and hallowed by considerations which could never change, and never lose their force.

I say never lose their force;—for what could a sanctified commemoration of the rest of the Great Creator, a commanded acknowledgment, from the creatures He had made, of their subjection and dependance, a periodical pause in their other employments that they might hallow and bless his name,—what, I say, could such reasons for an institution have to do with one age more than another, or with one economy more than another? Plainly, the obligation presses equally on the first man Adam, and the last born of his degenerate

sons. In this respect, the Sabbath was not made for Noah and the patriarchs specially, to commemorate the world's second birth ; nor for Moses and the Israelites specially, to celebrate the triumphs of the wilderness and the sea. It was made neither for Jew, nor Christian, nor Church, nor age ;—*The Sabbath was made FOR MAN.*

II. Other reasons for the original and indelible sanctity of this institution, I must note more briefly. Thus, what other inference can be drawn from its place in the law of the ten commandments,—that great summary of human duty,—that searching code which, in its Gospel spirituality and breadth, becomes the rule of all outward and inward holiness ; that eternal transcript of all creature obedience, which, when heaven and earth shall have passed away, shall stand out as the reflected will of God ? *Think not*, said the Great Teacher, *I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.* Will any raise a question as to the law here intended being the moral law given to Moses ? or conceding that, will they say that when our Lord declared neither *jot nor tittle* should pass from this law, He meant to say, *men shall keep all the commandments except the fourth ?*

Again, in contending for the universal obligation to separate a seventh portion of our time to the service of God, we cannot overlook the plain intimations contained in the earliest records of all nations, that, either with religious sanctions or

without them, men have observed this *weekly* division of time. Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, all seem to have known of it;—and the question is how, except as the relic of some universal tradition, those nations should have thought of such a measurement of time at all? For other divisions of time we can find reasons,—obvious, necessary, and natural. The daily rotation of the earth on its axis; the completed cycle of lunar phases; the sun imparting to the revolving worlds the blessings of cold and heat, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, are phenomena quite adequate to explain why we should break up our life into *days*, and *months*, and *years*; but for WEEKS we have *no* such reason, nor, indeed, *any* reason to give, except that it is one of the original appointments and laws of God. It is an arbitrary period, the recurrence of which neither nature nor reason seems, in any way, to have marked out for us, but which, on the all-commanding authority of revelation, men have been taught to set apart to sacred remembrances. *The Sabbath was MADE for man.*

III. Thus, as far as our limits would permit, I think it has been shown that, irrespective of dispensations, or Churches, or particular covenants, God did appoint it as an ordinance for the whole human family, that every recurring seventh day of their life should be separated to religious uses. He first “*blessed*” the day, that is, pledged himself to be propitious to the service which, in spirit and in

truth, men should offer Him on that day ; and then “ *hallowed* ” it, or, as the word is, “ *set it apart,* ” intimating that anything opposed or foreign to such religious service, was to be strictly forbidden. If this ground have been made good, I shall be less careful to adduce all that could be said in favour of the next question which might be raised ; namely, on the supposition that God has made this claim upon all men of a seventh portion of their time, is *that* seventh which has been set apart by the Christian Church the *right* seventh ; in other words, have we sufficient reason for believing that the change of day, from the *last* day of the week to the *first*, is agreeable to the will of God ? Now the only reasons, it would seem, which could justify such change, must be found either in an express revelation, or in the ascertained practice of those, who having for three years had the Lord of the Sabbath to guide them, must have known on what day He designed it should thenceforth be kept. A change of the actual day, it has been conjectured, from some expressions in the history, was made by Moses, at the time of the Exodus, transferring the holy day to that which first saw *Israel's redemption from bonds*,—what should hinder that, with sufficient authority, a change should not be made, again transferring our Sabbath to the day which, in the resurrection of the Son of God, saw the *redemption of the spiritual Israel from the grave* ? Besides, an avowed end of the Jewish Sabbath was as

a protest against false religions. The pious Israelite was distinguished from the idolaters among whom he dwelt, by his close observance of the sacred day:—why may not our Lord have ordained a change in the Sabbath of the Christian, as a protest against the continuing obstinacy of the Jew? Of course, these are no more than conjectures, and though sustained by names of great weight, they leave the fact to be judged of only as we should judge of all other facts; namely, by a reasonable and sufficient amount of historic evidence. And this we are thought to have, even in the scattered notices found in the sacred narrative itself,—in the frequent allusions to religious meetings on the first day of the week, in the choice of this day by our Lord for two successive manifestations to his disciples, in the selection of it for the first miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit, in the special mention of it by Paul as that on which he preached the Word and administered the sacraments, in the directions given to the Churches of Galatia and Corinth to lay by their alms that they might make an offering of them to God on the first day of the week,—all passages proving, as clearly as anything can, that, among the New Testament Christians, a character of separation and sacredness was attached to the *first* day, which was not accorded to any other.

To these revealed notices is to be added the testimony of other authorities, which, however lightly

we might esteem them on any question of *doctrine*, are quite competent to give their witness on a matter of *fact*. Such, for example, are the well-known letters of the younger Pliny, the universal consent of our Ecclesiastical historians, and the constantly recurring allusions to the day by all the Apostolic Fathers, under the familiar and apparently well-understood designation of THE LORD'S-DAY. These proofs seem to bear out the conclusion that, from the very morning of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week came to be held of the Christian world in all sanctity and reverence as the ordained Gospel Sabbath. And as we may be quite sure that the apostles would never have made such a change on their own responsibility, we naturally refer it to some express though unpreserved direction from Him, who, repudiating all unnatural and constrained austerity on the one hand, and yet having regard to the unchanging sanctity of moral ordinances on the other, declared, *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*

IV. And now, brethren, I come to the practical application of our subject, in the apprehended overthrow of all that is dear to a Christian mind by the opening of a great public exhibition on the Lord's-day. It is a topic which I approach with much pain, not a little heightened by a fear lest strong feeling should betray me into any infirmity—into any word or sentiment inconsistent with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But I have

prayed to be kept from this—have asked of God that I might nothing exaggerate, nothing represent unfairly, nothing set down in the spirit of an ill-tempered and scolding partisan—but rather that, speaking in sorrow more than in anger, I might win *you* to pray against this threatened evil—to pray against it as you would against the pestilence, or other feared providential scourge. This will not in any degree lead to a slackened diligence in the use of outward means, as you perceive from the first step I have invited you to take, in memorializing Her Majesty's responsible advisers against this first step to a new "Book of Sports." But still, remember, the thing to be done is to open eyes that are as yet blind, and to alarm consciences that now slumber; and this is a work to be done, not by might and not by power, not by wrangling and not by wrath, but by the Lord of Hosts pouring out upon our people a praying spirit, and enduing our beloved Queen with a wise and understanding heart.

With a jealousy, therefore, that respects as well the charitable temper required of a Gospel teacher, as the demands of an unbending and unfearing faithfulness, I may not speak of the contemplated opening of the new Exhibition on the Lord's-day in any other terms than as an impious affront to the honour of Almighty God—as a wanton outrage upon the religious feelings of the surrounding neighbourhoods—as a cruel encroachment upon the poor man's Sabbath rights—and as a legalized

incentive to the most debasing forms of viciousness and crime.

i. Look first, I say, at the *awful impiety* of this project. The terms of the charter to which a Protestant Queen is expected to set her hand and seal, set forth that all entrance to this great pleasure-house is to be strictly forbidden UNTIL ONE O'CLOCK; but that, after that hour, unrestrained admission will be afforded to that vast living tide, which, fed from tributary streams in every direction, from the river, and from the land, from monster steam-boats and monster trains, will have formed itself into a huge heaving mass of riot and profaneness at the so-called Palace doors. Well, here the first thought which must occur to any reflecting mind is, wherefore this strange bisection of the day into two such antagonistic parts? Whence comes it that this stroke of a time-piece is to transfer us, all at once, from a region of calm godliness, spiritual worship, noiseless acts of beneficence and love, to one of turbid, distracting, and tumultuous revelry? We look, I say, for some revealed warrant for giving to any ordinance of God this two-faced and self-contradicting character. Did the Almighty sanctify half a Sabbath, or did He sanctify a whole one? And if a whole one, where is our authority for allowing His claim to *one* part of the day, but devoting to the world the other? Brethren, these questions can be answered but in one way. The entire scheme is dictated by that wretched spirit of

compromise and double-dealing—that impious endeavour to unite Christ and Belial on the same throne, which has ever been the abominable thing that God hateth. For the Infidel who ignores the obligation of the Sabbath altogether, we have hope. He *is* a consistent, and he *may* be an honest man; and if so, who shall say how soon Christ may give him light? But for the man who *has* light, and who only uses it to serve God by halves—mingling loyalty with his rebellion, professed homage with his insult, in the morning crying, Hosanna to the Son of David; and in the afternoon, exclaiming, Let him be crucified—for him we have not this hope. His is the lukewarmness of Laodicea outdone. And should England lend her countenance to this dark impiety, what can she expect but to hear from Him who walketh in the midst of the Churches and holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, those awful words, “Because thou hast not kept my Sabbath from POLLUTING it, but hast FOLLOWED THY PLEASURE on my holy day, I will pour out my fury upon thee, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

ii. Look, in the second place, at the *outrage* which this desecration threatens to *the religious feelings* of the adjacent neighbourhoods. It may be said that, in all localities, religious people are the minority; and that if a clear case can be made out of social convenience or benefit to the many, the feelings of the few ought to give way. This principle is one which I think it would be very dangerous to admit. A

pious parent may have *nine* lovers of pleasure in his household, for *one* that is a lover of God ; yet he frames his domestic arrangements in harmony with the right choice of the *one*, and not with the mistaken wishes of the *nine*. And a Government which would vindicate its parental character must do the same. Besides, it is clear, that with this question of numbers, how many good people we have to legislate for, and how many bad, the powers that rule have nothing to do. If they are the sworn conservators of the Protestant faith, and if that faith regards the Lord's-day as an institution of perpetual sanctity, the very *listening* to the plea of expediency is the betrayal of a trust ; and the *acting* upon it a practical confession that they look for a social benefit to the community, by a direct infringement of the law of God !

To what end, then, I ask, (and it is a question in which we, as a neighbourhood, are deeply interested,) to what end are we to have every road, and walk, and thoroughfare, for many miles round this projected focus of ungodliness, deprived of the peace, the order, the quiet Sabbath respectability they have hitherto enjoyed ? Why are we to exchange the holy stillness, under cover of which we now meditate, and read, and pray, for the hoarse harsh din of Sabbath vehicles, of rabble throngs exchanging their loud vulgarities on their way to the fair, and shouting out their intoxicated and blaspheming songs as they are returning home ? Already, I am informed

on the authority of residents in our own parish, living in the line of road, that paths, hitherto sought and loved for their holy Sabbath quiet, are now closed hopelessly against all who like Isaac would fain go out to "meditate at eventide," owing to the throngs of impatient Sabbath-breakers going to see their boasted temple rise. Brethren, I trust you will not think,—especially I hope my poorer friends will not think,—that I charge it upon the recreations of our humble classes that they are *always* thus vociferous and coarse; I charge it upon the recreation of those only who go out to pollute God's holy day; and in regard to such persons there is no exaggeration in the picture. Two or three times in the year we have these Sabbath Saturnalia now; when the thoroughfare in front of this church presents scenes which we are grieved to have our children witness; but which, so soon as this new Babel of profanation shall be reared,—this Greenwich fair under a glass roof—we must expect to have enacted before their eyes every Sabbath day.

iii. And then again, brethren, look at this project as it must encroach cruelly upon the *poor man's Sabbath rest*. It is a principle I fear but too little understood by our labouring classes, that every step taken in the direction of Sabbath desecration, for purposes of *voluntary* pleasure, is a step in the same direction for purposes of *compulsory* work. The principle of sanctity once given up, the day brought down to the level of a respectable church usage, a

master may consistently say to his working men, 'If your conscience is lax enough to take *pleasure* for your *own* sake, it surely cannot task it much to do a little *work* for *mine*.' And this principle once recognised, that an employer may get out of his workmen a whole or half a day's more labour than he used to do, competition or cupidity will soon make a corresponding reduction in the rate of wages, until the labouring man finds he gains no more for working *seven* days, than he formerly did for working *six*. I have the fullest persuasion that many a poor man is spared from *compulsory* Sabbath labour now, because employers dare not, in the face of an almost universal verdict of society in favour of the sacredness of the day, force a workman's conscience. But let society once cancel that verdict, let the workman show, by his presence at the Sydenham fair, that he has no conscience to force,—and the master's shame will soon depart from him, and the labourer who refused to keep his Sabbath rest *holy*, will find, as he deserves to find, that he will have no Sabbath rest at all. Judge ye for yourselves, my humbler brethren, who has most right to be called the POOR MAN'S FRIEND.

But to come to more obvious and immediate mischief. Judging from the former Exhibition it is not unlikely that, on a fine Sunday, this huge daylight theatre will be visited by not less than 100,000 people. These will require, for the most part, carriages to convey them, meat and drink to refresh

them, officials to take their money, policemen to keep them in order. Now, only think what a fearful aggregate of Sabbath labour this will compel. Make as rough a computation as you may, of the time during which each visitor will be using the services of some other person—at a railway office, on the line, in the gardens, at places of refreshment; and remembering that those persons whom the visitor *sees*, are obliged to be assisted by many others whom he does *not see*, and a result will be arrived at, showing that for this large number to take their Sabbath *pleasure*, many thousands must be deprived of their Sabbath *rest*. Nay, as if this work of ruining souls could not be begun soon enough,—as if the promoters of this unchristian scheme had a very appetite for desecration,—the works are going on, there is reason to believe, while I speak. Only last Sunday these British slaves were seen at work by one known to me, who, going up to the house of God to worship, had to hear the noise of axe and hammer making discordant music with the church-inviting bell.* Now, brethren, to enable you to appreciate the magnitude of this evil of depriving men of the means of Sabbath instruction, I could wish for you nothing so awfully convincing, as that you should witness what I have witnessed often, both in this and a former incumbency,—the latter end of those who, from their connexion with public conveyances, were uniformly shut out from the sanctu-

* See Note A at the end.

ary, because they had to minister to the pleasure-seeker, on God's holy day. The recreation *to him*, was spiritual and eternal death *to them*. HE found his mirth, but *they* lost a soul. Such death-beds, I own, present a great mystery. When we see the vacant wonderment with which the dying man listens to the most elementary religious truths, or the judicial hardness which seems proof against the most tender appeals, or the awakened emotion which only lasts long enough to people the chamber of death with the mocking spectres of despair, and then feel how much the blame of all this belonged to *others* rather than to *him*,—we are, for the moment, amazed. But the answer comes speedily. ‘Be still. The moral law is eternal. My Sabbaths are for a SIGN. He who dishonours them in his life, shall be himself dishonoured in his end; and, grievous as may be the portion of him who has thus offended, to him by whom the offence cometh there is a woe more grievous still.’ Oh! brethren, pray we for these thoughtless speculators that God curse them not in a granted desire; that He lay not at their door the fearful responsibility of having destroyed thousands of undying souls,—yea, that rather than give them a Royal charter to make Christ's little ones offend and fall, He would bestow upon them, what we have the highest authority for declaring would be a less terrible boon; even “that a millstone were hanged about their neck and they be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

iv. Once more, brethren, I ask you to look at the *demoralizing influence* of this contemplated impiety. It was the great Burke, I believe, who once put forth the false and mischievous sentiment, that "vice lost half its danger by losing all its grossness." On a like principle, some appear to be contending now, that Sabbath immoralities will lose much of their evil, if we can only qualify their coarseness by the externals of cultivation and refinement. But sin is sin, hide it under what mask we will. Whilst, as to moral danger to the community, it is surely better that men should even *see* the dead men's bones and all the uncleanness, than that their eyes should be ensnared by the beauty of the whited sepulchre. The Sabbath-breaker now is a marked man; he steals away to his low tavern indulgences; he there herds with his like; and, as a conscious offender against the laws of God and man, waits till, under the protection of nightfall, he may steal to his home again. But if the proposed arrangement be brought about, he will commit the same offence,—under authority, with Royal countenance, on the plea that he wishes to enlarge the powers which God hath given him; nay, it is much if he parrot not, at Infidel bidding, the audacious pretence that he would offer a tribute of admiration "to nature and to nature's God." Oh! brethren, when will the race be extinct who seek to betray the Son of man with a kiss?

But will not the project under consideration be a

gain to public morals, in regard of the lower vices of sensuality and intoxication? I answer unhesitatingly, No. Unhappily, we are not without our precedent of these Sunday gardens now—gardens which, in their disposition and decorations, appeal, and in their degree successfully, to the very tastes which it is among the purposes of the new speculation to cultivate. And these pleasure-grounds are found to be the heart and centre of the most debasing vices. Returns have been put into my hands from one of these haunts of Sabbath festivity in a country town,—described as being, in themselves, most attractive and beautiful. Into these gardens 3,000 people have gone on a Sunday evening, consuming among them nearly 600 gallons of malt liquor alone;—a quantity which, if a reasonable deduction be made for the number of children, would suppose *one quart* to have been consumed by *every grown-up person, whether male or female*, upon the ground. Let us, for the honour of the female sex, make a still further deduction, and what a humiliating reflection is forced upon us as to the state of a large majority of the men! Brethren, these are painful details to have to bring into a pulpit. But when we have beaten the adversary from every other ground—the ground of right, of truth, of religious decency, of national piety and honour—it may be well to see if he has any standing-place on the ground which he thinks unassailably his own. And this argument, that he will draw men

off from the brutal indulgences of their own locality, is one which the champions of desecration make much of. Whereas I know, on the authority of those through whose hands the negotiations pass, that premiums of almost incredible amount are being offered for the liberty of erecting places in the neighbourhood, where the same low appetites may be ministered to, which the Sabbath-breaker finds gratified now in his own low tavern at home.* And then judge for yourselves whether he will be much less disposed to gratify them. Think of the excitement of the journey, the sensuous fascinations of the scene, the stimulating influence of a large living mass, all bent on unrestrained enjoyment,

*The following statement, supplied to me from a private source which may be implicitly relied on, will sufficiently justify several of the foregoing remarks:—"There are no less than seven public-houses now in course of erection, or about to be erected, near the Crystal Palace, one of which is to cost £30,000, and to contain stabling for 500 horses, tea-gardens, &c. The road leading from Anerly is literally thronged from ten to six o'clock every Sunday, and persons of all grades are to be seen there, some selling by the wayside, others gambling; and in the roads on either sides of the way scenes of the most revolting nature are taking place in open daylight.

"A labouring man, some two or three months since, took a small cottage and large garden in the Anerly road, and opened it as a beer-house and tea-gardens, and he now has from *four to five hundred persons* in his ground on the Sabbath day. Many more particulars of a like kind might be added, but with great difficulty, owing to the *secrecy observed by all parties.*"

and then consider whether any other change will be wrought, in the habits of those whom it is sought to reclaim, than that they will do under some decorated and emblazoned booth, what they now do in an alehouse, and waste far more than they do already of those precious earnings which should go to buy their children bread. And where the carcass is, there will the eagles be. The cunning pick-pocket will be there. The man of dissolute pleasures will be there. The shame of womanhood will be there;—all coming from far to keep each the Sabbath of their vocation—to worship at this great metropolis of immorality and sin.

Many other considerations there are, tending to make us view the present movement with deep dismay. We fear it cannot bode good to the cause of God and his truth, when Herod and Pilate are made friends; when the Romanist and the Neologian are urging the same forms of Sabbath observance; when “Gebel and Ammon and Amalek,”—the man of science, the man of pleasure, and the man of scrip and shares,—are all intent on the same scheme of social amelioration. The fear is not unnatural with us that the junction-point of this strange confederacy will be found, not in any result which they wish to *achieve*, so much as in some existing influence which it is their common desire to *destroy*,—namely, the influence of that pure and undefiled religion which teaches that science must bow to Scripture, that covetousness is only another name for idolatry, and that the

man who allows himself in vicious or forbidden pleasures shall not have any "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." We can only regard such united attempt as the first instalment of a yet more extended plan, by which we are to become assimilated to the profane usages of the Continent, until every place of public amusement or resort, from the national Museum to the itinerant puppet-show, shall throw open their doors to any Sabbath wanderer, who may desire, under cover of law, to do despite to God's holy day. The constant plea put forth for these Sabbath recreations, that something must be done towards elevating the moral and intellectual tastes of our people, is not tenable for an instant. For, admitting the necessity, why should not the time required for it be taken from one of the *six* days now appropriated to the world, rather than from the one only day which we now set apart for God? But the whole is in true keeping with Infidel patriotism. It looks only on its own things. It spares itself. And then, when affecting a desire to redeem time for the improvement of the poor, like him who in the parable spared to take of his own flock and his own herd, it will not, by an hour, anticipate the closing of the factory, but demands that half the time be taken away from the few hours that are now given to the church.*

One word more, and I have done. The former Exhibition was opened with prayer. The act was

* See Note B at the end.

a declared recognition of God's right to control our recreations, and of the necessity of his blessing to make them either innocent or happy. Will the projectors of the new undertaking DARE to open their building thus? Will they, holding in their hands the outspread charter of desecration, DARE, with the breath of invocation, to blaspheme the God of heaven? I hazard no reputation for prophecy when I say they will NOT. For, though I have no right to infer that they would hesitate at mocking GOD by such an act, if they thought it would raise their shares, I am persuaded they would fear so to mock the ENGLISH PEOPLE. There is an element of veneration in our national character, which will not suffer itself to be outraged beyond a certain limit. Our people, even the worst of them, have no love for gratuitous profanations: If they *do* consent to sit down at Belshazzar's feast, yet they will not drink wine out of the sacred vessels. Hence, whoever may be present at the coming inauguration of the god of this world in his palace, he will with difficulty repress the feeling, 'I know this place is to be opened in utter defiance of the laws of God, and therefore for me to ask his blessing upon it would be as if a robber should first kneel down and ask God that he might be successful in his plunder, or as if the traducer of his neighbour's fame should pray that he might have the benediction of heaven upon his ill report.' No, brethren, if this Charter be granted, the building will be opened, as it has been

commenced, without God, without a blessing, without a recognition of any power in the universe save that of Belial, who is to direct the pleasures of its votaries, and that of Mammon to fill the coffers of its founders with the fruit of unhallowed gains.

For the honour of our religion, then, for the moral happiness of our people, for the lengthening of our tranquillity, for the salvation of our land,—let me entreat you, while there is yet time, to protest against this uncalled-for impiety. Our voice made itself heard a short time ago, when a crafty Socinian influence, at the Post-Office, threatened our cherished sanctities :—we deserve to lose our Sabbaths for ever, if that voice be silent now. Wherefore, brethren, “ Watch ye ; stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men ; be strong.” Slacken not in your exertions, till all the weapons both of heaven and earth are spent ; until you have vindicated your character as citizens, your rights as subjects, your religious consistency as Protestants, your faith, and love, and zeal, and piety, as Christians and as men of God. So shall “ the Lord be entreated for our land,” and the on-coming “ plague be stayed.” Amen.

NOTE A.

The statement that men are employed on the ground on the Lord's-day, has been impugned, but in support of it I have permission to cite the authority of that respected upholder of our Sabbath sanctities, Joseph Wilson, Esq., of Clapham Park ; who *saw a large body of men at full work, with spades and pickaxes, on his way to church, on Sunday last.* The excuse set up for this is that these men were engaged in *firing the clay*, and that the nature of this work was such as not to allow of the fires going out without serious loss. Without quoting some opinions given by the men themselves, denying this alleged necessity, I may mention that inquiries made in the neighbourhood by myself, convinced me that work is done on the Sabbath—over and above attending to the fires—though carried on in a way which tall boards and the sealed lips of interested parties make it difficult to detect.

NOTE B.

The challenge of those who profess such anxiety for elevating the condition of the poor, to give up some of their *own* time for the purpose, and not to “rob God,” is not put forth merely as a fair argumentative point. It is a grave suggestion which has been thrown out more than once, whether there should not be *one half-day in the week* agreed upon, through the length and breadth of the land, as the labouring man's time for recreation and self-improvement. In manufacturing districts, where labour is paid for by the *quantity* done, leaving the workman master of his own time, this half-day is

very generally *taken*, and long usage has appropriated Monday afternoon for the purpose. Why should not the convention be extended to those who have to work by *time*? The proposal seems to me to be worthy of all consideration. Let every mart, and mill, and factory, close on Monday, at two o'clock. Let the national Museum, and other places of intellectual improvement, be thrown open. Let the paid Exhibitions, the Crystal Palace among them, lower their terms of admission to some merely nominal price. Let Societies be organized for providing lectures in the evening, on subjects of popular interest. Let district reading-rooms be opened, supplied with well-conducted newspapers, and other periodical literature. Let the national school-room be available on that evening for different adult classes, under the guidance of the clergy, or other friends of social improvement. That there is a desire among our poor to avail themselves of such facilities as those here referred to, I have, for the most part, *proved* in my own district; and should greater opportunities be afforded by employers, not only, I believe, would a change for good be effected in the social tastes and habits of our people, but the way would be gradually prepared for their realizing their Sabbaths as a "DELIGHT," and, in the refined exercises of sacredness and mercy, keeping them "HOLY UNTO THE LORD."

ERRATA.

Page 30, line 1 of Note B. For "*of*" read "*to*."
 Page 31, line 5. For "*mart*" read "*wharf*."



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